

our towns. This is about economics, but it is also about our culture and identity. After all, you won't find the heart and soul of Iowa at Wal-Mart or Home Depot out in the strip malls. No, the heart and soul of Iowa is in our family farms and on Main Street in communities all across my State. That is why we need to be as generous as possible—and creative as possible—in keeping our downtowns not just alive but thriving.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I'm involved in funding many hundreds of programs every year. But the Main Street Iowa program—providing challenge grants to revitalize downtown buildings across my state—is in a class by itself. It's smart. It's effective. And it touches communities and people in very concrete ways.

For example, the citizens of Central City, IA, are making efforts to improve their downtown areas. Central City received a \$50,000 Main Street Challenge Grant in 2002, and has since put that money to use renovating 4 different buildings.

This first project was built in 1914 as a bank, but housed taverns and bars for more than 60 years. It was vacant for 15 years before renovation, and is now in use as an art and gift center. It was the winner of a 2004 Main Street Iowa Award for best total rehabilitation of a small building.

The next project allowed an international shipping and marketing service company, to repair and re-paint the façade of their building, improving the roof, decking, masonry, and parapets.

The third project, the McShane Annex, has been empty since 1989 when a fire destroyed the interior of the building. Using the Main Street Grant, the building's renovation included a new rubber roof, removal of warped plywood covering on the windows, an installation of energy efficient windows, and a restoration of the historic storefront of the two-story, brick Victorian commercial building. The building is now the home of Timeless Treasures, an Americana retail store.

The final project is the renovation of the former Mills Hardware building, another two story, brick Victorian commercial structure. This building was vacant for 10 years. Rear windows were broken and the upstairs had become the home for nesting birds, but with the help of the Main Street grant, the building quickly turned into the home of Aragon Mortgage and Aragon Medical Equipment. Improvements and renovations to the building included the installation of a new roof, repair of the masonry, a paint job for the wood trim, the decorative metal window cornices, and the roof parapet, the addition of an ADA-compliant entrance, the creation of a new housing for the freight elevator, and the installation of more than 20 energy-efficient windows.

The beauty of the Main Street Iowa program is that the ideas and initiatives come from our small towns and

rural communities. I have been pleased to secure \$1.5 million in funding since 2002 for Main Street Iowa Challenge Grants. The Main Street programs of the Iowa Department of Economic Development help provide technical assistance, but, as we have seen in Central City, success itself comes from local leadership, local teamwork, and home-grown ideas and solutions.

These projects are a shining example of new construction and a catalyst for future projects. When people see the anchor businesses on Main Street being renovated or expanded, this can change the whole psychology of a town or community. It offers hope. It serves as a catalyst for a far-reaching ripple effect of positive changes and future development.

I congratulate the citizens of Central City for putting together winning proposals to secure Main Street Challenge Grants. Their efforts to reinvigorate their historic downtown are setting a terrific example for other small towns across America, and for that, I salute them.●

#### CEDAR FALLS, IOWA

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, one of the greatest challenges we face—not just in Iowa but all across America—is preserving the character and vitality of our towns. This is about economics, but it is also about our culture and identity. After all, you won't find the heart and soul of Iowa at Wal-Mart or Home Depot out in the strip malls. No, the heart and soul of Iowa is in our family farms and on Main Street in communities all across my State. That is why we need to be as generous as possible and creative as possible in keeping our downtowns not just alive but thriving.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I'm involved in funding many hundreds of programs every year. But the Main Street Iowa program—providing challenge grants to revitalize downtown buildings across my state—is in a class by itself. It's smart. It's effective. And it touches communities and people in very concrete ways.

An example of this effect can be found in the efforts of the citizens of Cedar Falls to restore and reinvigorate their downtown area. Downtown Cedar Falls pursued the Challenge Grant opportunity from Main Street Iowa on behalf of two projects: The Black Hawk Hotel, which is the oldest continuously running hotel in the state of Iowa; and the Jiva Salon spa building. Both buildings received dramatic façade improvements that restored the buildings to their intended looks, and as a result contributed to the success of the businesses that occupy them. The hotel also renovated its interior, adding a barber shop, an evening lounge, 24 luxury suites, a deli, and a sushi bar, and the salon now houses a first class spa that attracts a regional audience.

Downtown Cedar Falls is a newly recognized Cultural District by the Iowa

Department of Cultural Affairs, and that designation resulted in part from the impact of these two projects along with the other investments encouraged through their initiative. The beauty of the Main Street Iowa program is that the ideas and initiatives come from our towns and rural communities. I have been pleased to secure \$1.5 million in funding since 2002 for Main Street Iowa Challenge Grants. The Main Street programs of the Iowa Department of Economic Development help provide technical assistance, but, as we have seen in Cedar Falls, success itself comes from local leadership, local teamwork, and home-grown ideas and solutions.

This project is a shining example of new construction and a catalyst for future projects. When people see one of the anchor businesses on Main Street being renovated or expanded, this can change the whole psychology of a town or community. It offers hope. It serves as a catalyst for a far-reaching ripple effect of positive changes.

I congratulate the citizens of Cedar Falls for putting together a winning proposal to secure a Main Street Challenge Grant. Their efforts to revitalize their historic downtown are setting a terrific example for other towns across America, and for that, I salute them.●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:08 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Croatt, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3169. An act to provide the Secretary of Education with waiver authority for students who are eligible for Pell Grants who are adversely affected by a natural disaster.

H.R. 3650. An act to allow United States courts to conduct business during emergency conditions, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following resolution:

H. Res. 422. Resolution expressing the profound sorrow of the House of Representatives on the death of the Honorable William H. Rehnquist, Chief Justice of the United States.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following